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Le Lot. Padirac, Rocamadour, Lacave. Guide du Touriste, du Naturaliste et de l'Archéologue. Par Armand Viré. vii and 310 pp., 89 Illustrations, mostly from Photographs, 3 Maps, and 3 Plans in Colours. Masson & Co., Paris, 1907. (Price, frs. 4.50.)

The latest volume in the Collection Boule, which now numbers six guidebooks that are much appreciated by tourists and students of natural science and archæology. The volume deals with the department of Lot, which has great attractions for the tourist and naturalist as it is one of the most picturesque regions in France. Its old towns and châteaux are full of interest and charm and here are caverns such as the grottos of Lacave and the subterranean lakes of Padirac which French students of caves have made famous. The photographs and maps are excellent and the text fulfills its helpful purpose.

Scientific Confirmations of Old Testament History. By G. Frederick Wright, D.D., LL.D., F.G.A.A. 12mo, pp. xv, 432. Bibliotheca Sacra Co., Oberlin, Ohio, 1906.

There is a growing tendency to regard legends and traditions as important repositories of scientific truth. As they are traced back to earlier, simpler forms, it generally appears that they have their origin in striking natural phenomena. The most unexpected details are usually the most significant, partly because they are the least likely to be the product of imagination, and partly because they can be the most easily tested in the light of modern science. In his recent book on scientific confirmation of Old Testament history, Professor Wright not only emphasizes this principle but goes farther and assumes that the stories of the Bible are the almost unchanged records left by eye-witnesses to the events described. In order, as he distinctly says, to support this assumption and to prove thereby the reliability of the Bible, he investigates the accounts of various events from the standpoint of geography and geology.

After three well-written chapters of somewhat theological general discussion, the author takes up "the records of four startling events which are peculiarly open to scientific cross-examination. They are: (1) the passage of the Red Sea; (2) the parting of the Jordan; (3) the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; and (4) the Noachian deluge." The passage of the Red Sea by the Hebrews as they fled from Egypt is explained in the usual way as having been rendered possible by the driving away of the water from a shallow bar at the northern end of the Gulf of Suez by a violent northeast wind. The details of the narrative in Genesis make it probable that the Isthmus of Suez in the days of the Pharoahs stood thirty feet lower than now. The crossing of the Jordan River dry-shod at a later date by the invading Israelites under Joshua as they passed westward from Moab to Judea is equally susceptible of scientific explanations. On the evidence of a series of alluvial terraces, the conclusion is reached that the river was several times temporarily dammed by a sudden anticlinal arching of the lower part of its bed. The Israelites crossed the dry bed of the river on one such arch immediately after its formation. Though such a movement of the earth's crust is possible, no convincing evidence of it is presented. So far as can be gathered from Prof. Wright's description, the terraces, like hundreds of others in the arid regions of Asia, may be the result of alternate deposition and erosion under the varying climatic conditions of glacial and inter-glacial epochs. As an alternative hypothesis the author suggests, but does not accept, the simple and plausible theory that the narrow inner gorge of the Jordan was temporarily dammed by a landslide as the Columbia and other streams have been. One of the earthquakes which still occur in the region may have occasioned the landslide, and another, somewhat later, may have caused the fall of the walls of Jericho so strikingly recounted in Joshua. Sodom and Gomorrah lie in the same district as Jericho in the bottom of the great fault rift of the Jordan Valley. The underlying strata are full of oil, and bitumen pits abound near the Dead Sea. Accordingly, the destruction of the cities is explained as due to the sudden outburst and accidental ignition of an oil-well along a fault-line. If the phenomena resembled those of the burning wells at Baku on the Caspian, which are vividly described, the author of Genesis has fitly said that "the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire . . . out of heaven."

Prof. Wright's discussion of the deluge, occupying more than half the book, is much less convincing than that which precedes it. The hypothesis advocated is that "in connection with the instability of the earth's crust accompanying the Glacial epoch . . . there was a widespread depression of Europe (to a depth of about 1,400 feet), and of Northern, Central and Western Asia (3,000 feet in Central Asia), which, though gradual at first, culminated in a catastrophe of more rapid subsidence, followed by a still more rapid emergence of the continents, with numerous successive sudden uplifts over various portions of the submerged area." The catastrophic subsidence and emergence, so unique in its universality and suddenness, is supposed to have been completed in little more than a year, or at most so quickly that one man saw it all. The basis for believing that this has taken place in Europe is found in the conclusion of Prestwich that the rubble of Great Britain, the ossiferous deposits in fissures in France and Spain, the loess of the Channel Islands, and the hippopotamus bones in the caves of Sicily cannot be accounted for otherwise. No mention is made of the fact that most geologists, including such men as Geikie, believe that the facts can be explained without postulating submergence.

The chapter upon "the evidence of a deluge in Asia" is the most important and least satisfactory in the book. All of the chief lines of argument are open to serious criticism. The eastern end of the Black Sea is bordered by an old beach, indicating that the land once stood 700 feet lower than now, but there is no evidence in support of Wright's tacit assumption that at the other end of the sea and in far distant regions the land stood equally low. As to the age of the beach we only know that since its formation there has been time for the carving of deep, though narrow valleys in the bottoms of old valleys. Man may or may not have lived at the time. So large a beach must have required not one year but hundreds, at least, for its formation. Again, the author supposes that alluvial deposits and terraces in the Jordan Valley and around the Dead Sea indicate an encroachment of the ocean. Granting this for the moment, there is still no proof that man then inhabited the world, and the sea must have stood at a high level for many centuries before such abundant deposits could be formed. It is superfluous, however, to assume the presence of the sea, for the deposits appear to be precisely such as were formed in and around Great Salt Lake in Utah and various salt lakes in Asia when the moister climate of the Glacial Period caused them to expand as the rivers increased in volume. As another reason for believing in a sudden deluge Wright states that in recent times a vast Mediterranean sea covered Chinese Turkestan and the Gobi Desert, and communicated with the Arctic Ocean across Dzungaria. Recent travellers, however, find no evidence of the encroachment of the sea since the Eocene period, several million years ago. The Han-hai, a great inland lake mentioned by the early Chinese, has, to be sure, existed within historic times, but it was of the same origin as our expanded Great Salt Lake. It is generally agreed that the climate of central Asia has grown drier during the most recent geological times and perhaps within historic times; and this fact is appealed to by Wright as a proof of the withdrawal of the sea from over Siberia. Unfortunately for the argument, it is not yet proved that the sea recently stood over Siberia, and if it did, we are still left to explain why similar climatic changes have taken place in America, Africa, and Australia where the sea did not markedly encroach. The glacial period appears to have been responsible for the changes of climate, which in general are supposed by geologists to be due to world-wide, not local causes. Finally, the author says that in Northern China and Turkestan the presence of loess in a broad terrace-like band, parallel to the base of the mountains and 3,000 feet above the sea, proves that the sea once stood at that level. In Chinese Turkestan a similar band of loess can be seen for a thousand miles at the base of the Kwen Lun Mountains where it is now being formed by the rivers which wash out from the uplands loess formerly deposited upon the mountains by the wind. All the phenomena connected with loess can be explained without the presence of the sea.

Although Professor Wright's theory of the deluge may not be tenable, his book is of value in calling fresh attention to the usefulness of legends and ancient records as indicators of interesting points for scientific investigations, and as confirmation of scientific conclusions. In reading it, one looks in vain for a statement of views differing from those of the author. This failure to give due consideration to alternative hypotheses makes the facts presented appear to the average reader to signify much more than they do to one who has in person examined the evidence in Asia. The clear and interesting style of Professor Wright's book will probably win for it wide popular as distinguished from scientific approval.

E. H.

In Korea with Marquis Ito. Part I.—A Narrative of Personal Experiences. Part II.—A Critical and Historical Inquiry. By George Trumbull Ladd. x and 477 pp., 12 Illustrations, 3 Appendices, and Index. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1908. (Price, $2.50.)

In 1906-7, Professor Ladd of Yale University delivered many lectures and public addresses in various cities and towns of Japan. While in that country he received an invitation from Marquis Ito, the Japanese Resident-General in Korea, to visit that country as his guest. He was informed that the Resident-General thought "I might be of help to him and to Japan in solving the difficult problem of furthering for the Koreans themselves the benefits which the existing relations of the two countries made it desirable for both to secure."

Professor Ladd accepted the invitation and this book is one of the results. His opportunities for studying the people, their country, and the Japanese policy were of course exceptional. Part I is a statement of his personal observations and experiences and the conclusions he reached with regard to some of the questions involved in the problem of establishing satisfactory relations between Japan and Korea which, he says, are bound together, physically, socially, and politically. In Part II he deals with the present and future relations of the two countries in the light of the studies he made on the ground. For the purposes of this inquiry he had the advantage of access to authoritative information which had not been published.